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33  
JULY

DIGITAL  
EDITION

# SPAWN



McFARLANE  
EX



**image**<sup>®</sup> COMICS PRESENTS:

# "SHADOWS"



story

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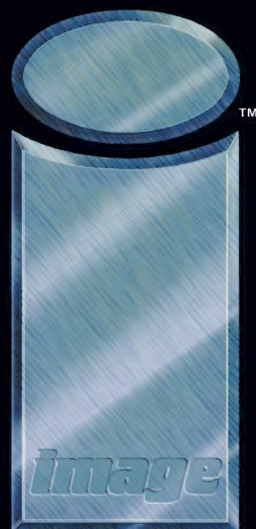
Dedicated to:  
**GENE COLAN**

FOR IMAGE COMICS


LARRY MARDER - exec. director    TONY LOBITO - publisher

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CHILL NIGHT  
AIR BLANKETS  
MANHATTAN  
AS THE  
CLOUDS  
BREAK UP.

AS  
ACTIVITY  
RESUMES  
ITS NORMAL  
PACE, THE  
STREETS  
ARE SLOWLY  
RID OF ALL  
EVIDENCE OF  
A DOWN-  
POUR.

MIXING  
WITH WASTE  
AND LITTER,  
THE RAIN-  
WATER  
GATHERS  
MOMENTUM...

THROUGH  
THESE BLACK  
BOWELS,  
THE STREETS  
SLOUGH OFF  
THEIR  
UNWANTED  
GARBAGE.

...CARVING  
PATHS TO  
HUNDREDS  
OF  
SCATTERED  
DRAINAGES.

THE  
RAIN  
IS  
OVER.

IT'S  
TIME.

FIRST  
YOU'LL  
FEEL THE  
PHYSICAL  
PAIN AS I  
TEAR YOU  
APART.  
PIECE BY  
PIECE.



LIMB  
BY  
LIMB.



THEN  
I'LL NAIL  
YOU WHERE  
IT COUNTS  
THE MOST--  
YOUR ONE  
TRULY WEAK  
PLACE--



--THE  
HEART.

AND  
WHILE YOU'RE  
TRYING TO  
FIGURE OUT  
WHO'S FRIEND  
AND WHO'S  
FOE--

--I'LL BE  
WATCHING FROM  
THE SHADOWS,  
WAITING FOR JUST  
THE RIGHT  
MOMENT.

**HAAAAHAHA**

THE  
THING  
THAT MADE  
YOU A  
SPAWN IN  
THE FIRST  
PLACE.

A FIENDISH CACKLE REVERBERATES THROUGH THE REEKING SUBTERRANEAN MAZE.



THE NEXT  
EVENING.

THE DEBATE HAS GONE  
ON FOR AN HOUR NOW.  
WITH NO DECISION IN  
SIGHT.

ITS TOPIC IS ONE THAT'S MADE  
THE ROUNDS A DOZEN TIMES  
BEFORE: IS THE PRESENCE OF  
THIS DARK, CAPED GUARDIAN  
A BLESSING TO THE LOCAL  
VAGRANTS... OR A CURSE?

IF I STAY  
HERE, YOU MUST BE  
PREPARED FOR ALL-OUT  
WAR. ANY TIME. ANY  
PLACE. AND SOME OF  
YOUR FRIENDS MAY  
BE AMONG THE  
ENEMY.

YOU  
THINK ABOUT  
THAT... AND HOW  
DEEP YOU WANT  
TO BE INVOLVED  
IN SOMETHING  
YOU CAN'T  
CONTROL.

WE  
ALREADY  
TOLD YOU, AL.  
THOSE WEREN'T  
OUR PALS THAT  
TRIED TO KILL  
YOU.\*

BUNCH'A  
YELLOW-BELLY  
RATS. THAT'S  
ALL.

I'VE FOUND  
ANOTHER  
PLACE I CAN GO.  
IT'D BE SAFER FOR  
ALL OF US.

CAN I SAY  
SOMETHING?  
WHAT A  
LOAD OF  
**CRAP!**

EVENTUALLY,  
THE SICK  
LAUGHTER  
FADES.

\* SEE THE ENTIRE  
BLOOD-FEUD  
MINI-SERIES \*\* Tom.





WHAT'S  
YOUR  
PROBLEM,  
BOBBY?

YOU.

WHAT?!



LOOK, YOU WANT TO RUN  
OUT ON US AGAIN, *FINE*. THAT'S  
YOUR CALL. BUT DON'T TRY TO  
PIN *ANY* OF THIS ON *US*.

WE'RE  
NOT AS  
FRAGILE  
AS YOU  
THINK.



YOU SEE, AL,  
THIS TROUBLE DIDN'T  
*START* WITH YOU. WHAT  
WE GO THROUGH HAS  
BEEN THIS WAY FOR A  
LONG TIME. THE PSYCHOS,  
CRIME AND VIOLENCE...  
*NONE OF THAT'S*  
GOING TO  
CHANGE.

WE'LL STILL  
GET BEAT UP, SHOT  
AT AND MUGGED BY THE  
BAD GUYS. *HELL!* EVEN  
THE *GOOD GUYS* PICK  
ON US, SO FORGET  
THE NURSEMAID  
CRAP.

WE'LL  
SURVIVE.  
ALWAYS  
HAVE.





BUT  
I'M COM-  
POUNDING  
THESE  
PROBLEMS  
BY BEING  
EVERYONE'S  
TARGET.

IT'S BEEN  
A FRIGGIN'  
SEA OF  
FREAKS...

"... COPS.  
MONSTERS.

"HITMEN. YOU  
NAME IT. EVERY  
WEIRDO POSSIBLE  
WAS TRASHING  
YOUR HOME.

"THAT'S NOT  
FAIR TO ANY  
OF YOU."



FAIR?

**CRIPES! WE'RE SOCIETY'S GARBAGE. WE AIN'T NEVER GOING TO GET A FAIR SHAKE. AS FOR THE INTRUDERS, THAT'S YOUR PROBLEM TO FIX.**

**BUT THEY'VE BECOME YOURS, TOO.**

**THEN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT, DAMN IT! STOP THE WHINING AND TAKE THE BULL BY THE HORN!**

**BUT I'LL TELL YOU SOMETHING, CHAPEL DIDN'T ACT ALONE. ONE THING I KNOW FROM MY VIETNAM DAYS, A GOOD SOLDIER ONLY ACTS WHEN ORDERED.**

**SOMEONE TOLD HIM TO PULL THE TRIGGER. THERE'S YOUR TARGET. FIND THE BUGGER WHO STOLE YOUR IDENTITY, YOUR LIFE, AND EVERYTHING YOU LOVED.**

**REMEMBER-- CHAPEL KILLED ME, TOO.\* IF I HAD YOUR POWER, I'D KILL THE PIG... IF HE WEREN'T ALREADY DEAD.**

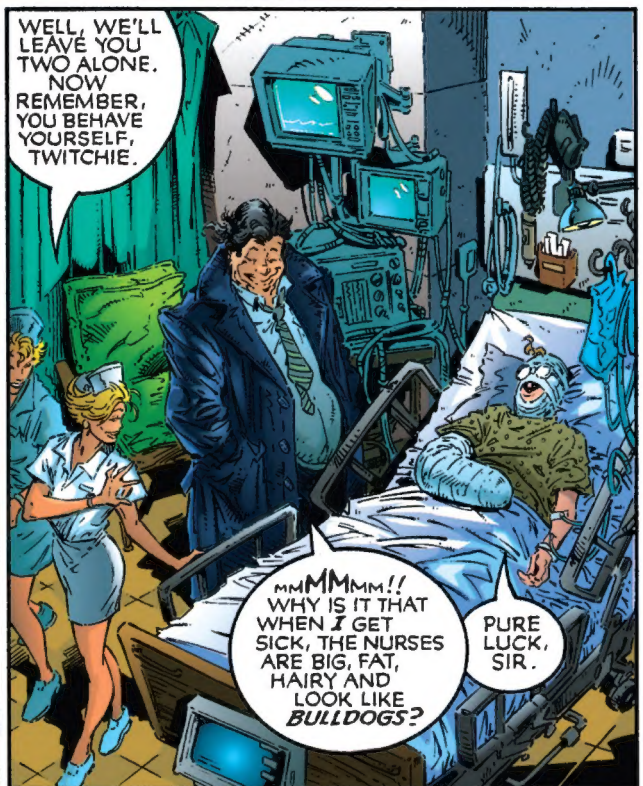
**...INCLUDING YOUR WIFE.**

**A MOMENT OF AWKWARD SILENCE.**

**THEN...**

**THANKS, BOBBY.**







LOOK, TWITCH, I'VE DECIDED TO PUT EVERYTHING ON THE BACK BURNER FOR A WHILE. CONCENTRATE ON YOUR CASE EXCLUSIVELY. IT'S HIGH TIME I FIGURED OUT WHAT THAT *SPAWN'S* ABOUT. AIN'T *NO* ONE GOING TO TOUCH MY BUDDY AND NOT *PAY* FOR IT SOME WAY.\*

THANKS, GRANDMA.

\* SEE *BLOODFEUD* MINI-SERIES - Tom.

C'MON. SERIOUSLY, THE DOC SAYS THERE'S STILL A CHANCE FOR PROBLEMS. SOME SERIOUS. HOW YOU FEELING. REALLY.

I HURT.

HURT LIKE HELL.

BUT I NEED YOU TO DO ME A FAVOR. *FORGET* ABOUT ME. IF CHIEF BANKS IS TIED TO SOME CHILD KILLER, *BRING HIM DOWN.*

I'M IN PAIN, BUT NOWHERE AS MUCH AS THE PARENTS OF THOSE SLAUGHTERED KIDS.

MOM'S OUT TALKING TO THE DOCTORS, SHE'LL BE IN SHORTLY.

HOW'R'YA DOING, DAD?

COOL, DAD! YOU LOOK LIKE *FRANKENSTEIN!*

MOM'S BEEN CRYING LOTS, BUT I'VE BEEN A *BIG* GIRL.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

**DADDY!  
DADDY!**

I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT, PARTNER.





BOSS?

IS THAT  
YOU?  
BOSS.



SO.

THERE  
YOU  
ARE.

SPAWN. HE'S  
TALKING CRAZY  
LIKE HE'S GONNA  
**LEAVE** OR SOME-  
THING. JUST LIKE  
YOU SAID.



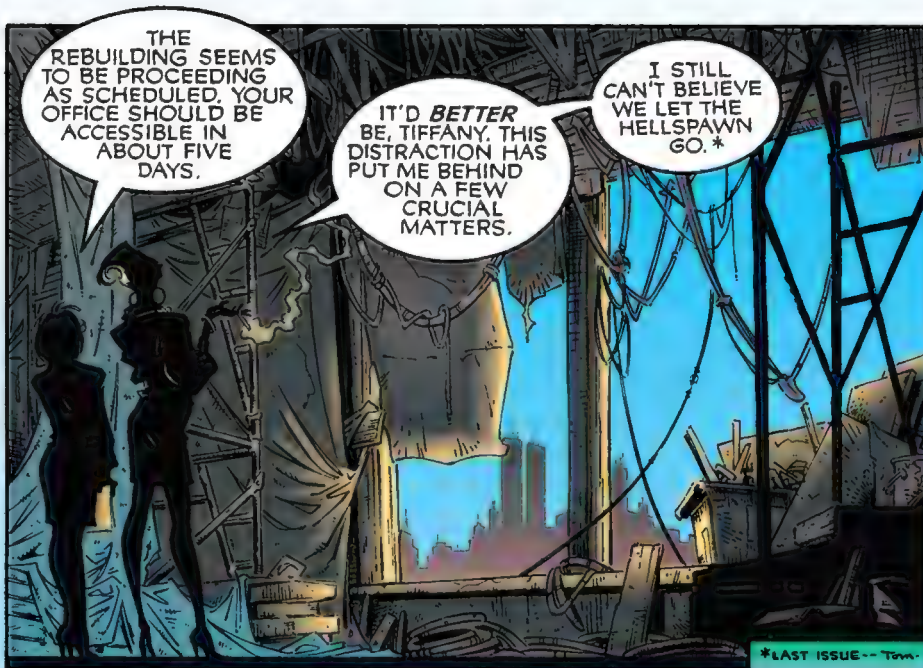
DO  
ME A  
FAVOR.

SURE,  
BOSS.  
ANYTHING.  
I'LL DO WHAT-  
EVER YOU  
WANT.



GET LOST.  
BUT COME  
BACK IN A FEW  
DAYS. I NEED  
SOME HELP  
SETTING A  
**TRAP** FOR OUR  
FRIEND.





THE REBUILDING SEEMS TO BE PROCEEDING AS SCHEDULED. YOUR OFFICE SHOULD BE ACCESSIBLE IN ABOUT FIVE DAYS.

IT'D *BETTER* BE, TIFFANY. THIS DISTRACTION HAS PUT ME BEHIND ON A FEW CRUCIAL MATTERS.

I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE WE LET THE HELLSPAWN GO.\*

\*LAST ISSUE -- Tom



REMEMBER WHAT OUR LEADER SAID, RAPHAEL. THE SPAWN WAS ONLY ACTING AS WE WOULD HAVE.

DON'T PATRONIZE ME, TIFFANY.

THAT WASN'T MY INTENTION. I CAN APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT YOUR SECTOR HAS BEEN DISRUPTED, BUT THINGS COULD BE WORSE.

AT LEAST THE BUILDING'S *EXTERIOR* APPEARANCE IS NORMAL.

"MANKIND SEES JUST ANOTHER CORPORATE ENTITY... NOT THEIR ATTENTIVE *PROTECTORS*."



**JASON WYNN, SUPREME DIRECTOR OF ALL U.S. INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES, PACES HIS OFFICE, BROODING OVER HIS CURRENT IMPASSE.**

SOMEBODY DEEP IN THE ORGANIZATION IS TRYING TO SLIT MY THROAT. AND NOW I'VE GOT POLICE CHIEF **BANKS** CRACKING UNDER THE PRESSURE.

THAT **FILE**. HOW THE HELL DID SPAWN EVEN GET **NEAR** IT? THE GODDAMN SYSTEM SHOULD HAVE CREATED RED HERRINGS FOR HIM TO CHASE.

EXCUSE ME, SIR. I'VE CHECKED WITH PERSONNEL AND HIS TRANSFER IS COMPLETELY LEGITIMATE. EVERYTHING'S BY THE BOOK.

GET HIM.

WE KNOW FITZGERALD'S NOT SPAWN, BUT HE STILL HAS A STINK ABOUT HIM. THE WHOLE SET-UP IS FAR TOO CONVENIENT.

AH, MR. FITZGERALD. WHAT A WONDERFUL SURPRISE. I'VE LOOKED FORWARD TO THIS DAY FOR A LONG TIME.

THIS IS NO COINCIDENCE, **BANKS**. THE **FILE**. NOW **THIS**. AT LEAST IT'LL BE THAT MUCH EASIER TO KEEP HIM UNDER SURVEILLANCE.

HE'S BEEN BRIEFED AND BEGINS REPORTING TO YOU TOMORROW MORNING.

**UNKNOWN TO WYNN, TERRY FITZGERALD IS PREPARING TO PLAY THE SAME GAME.**



A FEW NIGHTS LATER...

Um.

AL.

AL  
SIMMONS?

SOME TIME AGO, TOO MANY PEOPLE KNEW FAR TOO MUCH ABOUT HIM. THEY HAD KNOWLEDGE THAT KEPT HIM TRAPPED, WITH ENOUGH LEFT OVER TO EVENTUALLY COST HIM HIS LIFE.

NOW, GIVEN A SECOND CHANCE, AL HAS ENSURED THAT THOSE AROUND HIM KNOW ONLY WHAT HE WANTS THEM TO KNOW. HE'S REVEALED JUST GENERAL INFORMATION.

ONE FACT ESPECIALLY HAS BECOME SACRED, PROTECTED AT ALL COSTS: HIS IDENTITY.

NO ONE WOULD HAVE ANY WAY OF KNOWING IT.

**WHAT**  
DID YOU  
CALL  
ME?!





HOW  
DO YOU  
KNOW  
WHO I  
AM?

SOME  
STRANGER  
WANTED ME TO  
FIND YOU. THEN, I  
WAS SUPPOSED TO  
SAY THREE THINGS:  
AL SIMMONS.  
JASON WYNN.  
AND SOMETHING  
ABOUT WANDA.

AND  
THAT HE  
WANTS TO  
MEET YOU.

WHY  
ME?

I  
DON'T.

HE DIDN'T SAY.  
I'M JUST A  
MESSENGER.

THEN GO!  
TELL YOUR  
STRANGER HE  
KNOWS WHERE HE  
CAN FIND ME.

SPAWN RELEASES  
HIS PREY, KNOWING  
IT WILL SCURRY TO  
ITS MASTER.





AND  
WHEN  
IT  
DOES...

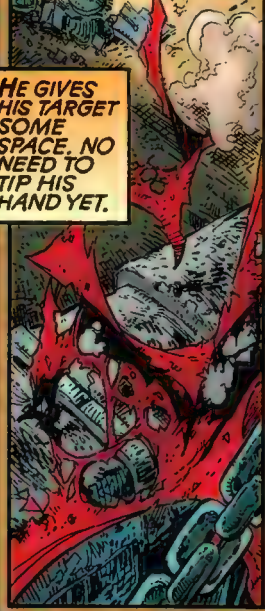
... SPAWN  
WILL BE  
WAITING.

FOR TONIGHT,  
THE SHADOWS  
WILL LIVE.





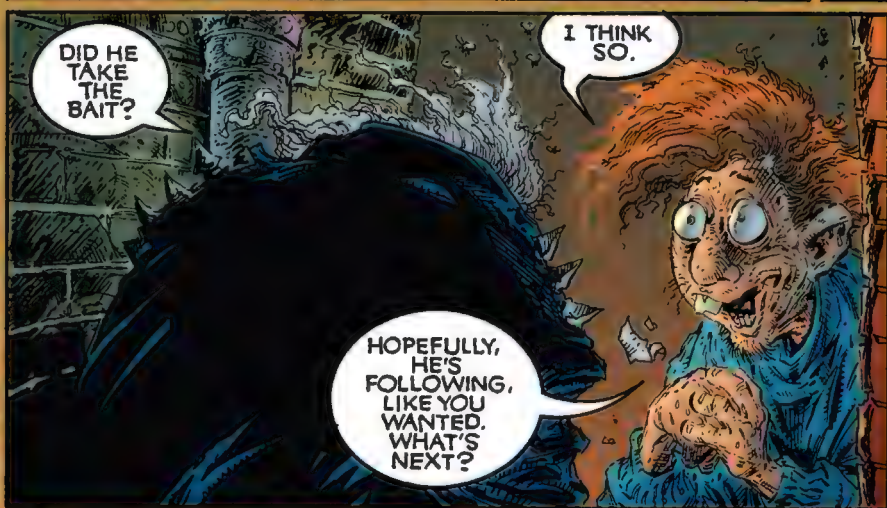
HE GIVES  
HIS TARGET  
SOME  
SPACE. NO  
NEED TO  
TIP HIS  
HAND YET.



Pssst!

OVER  
HERE.

BOSS?



DID HE  
TAKE  
THE  
BAIT?

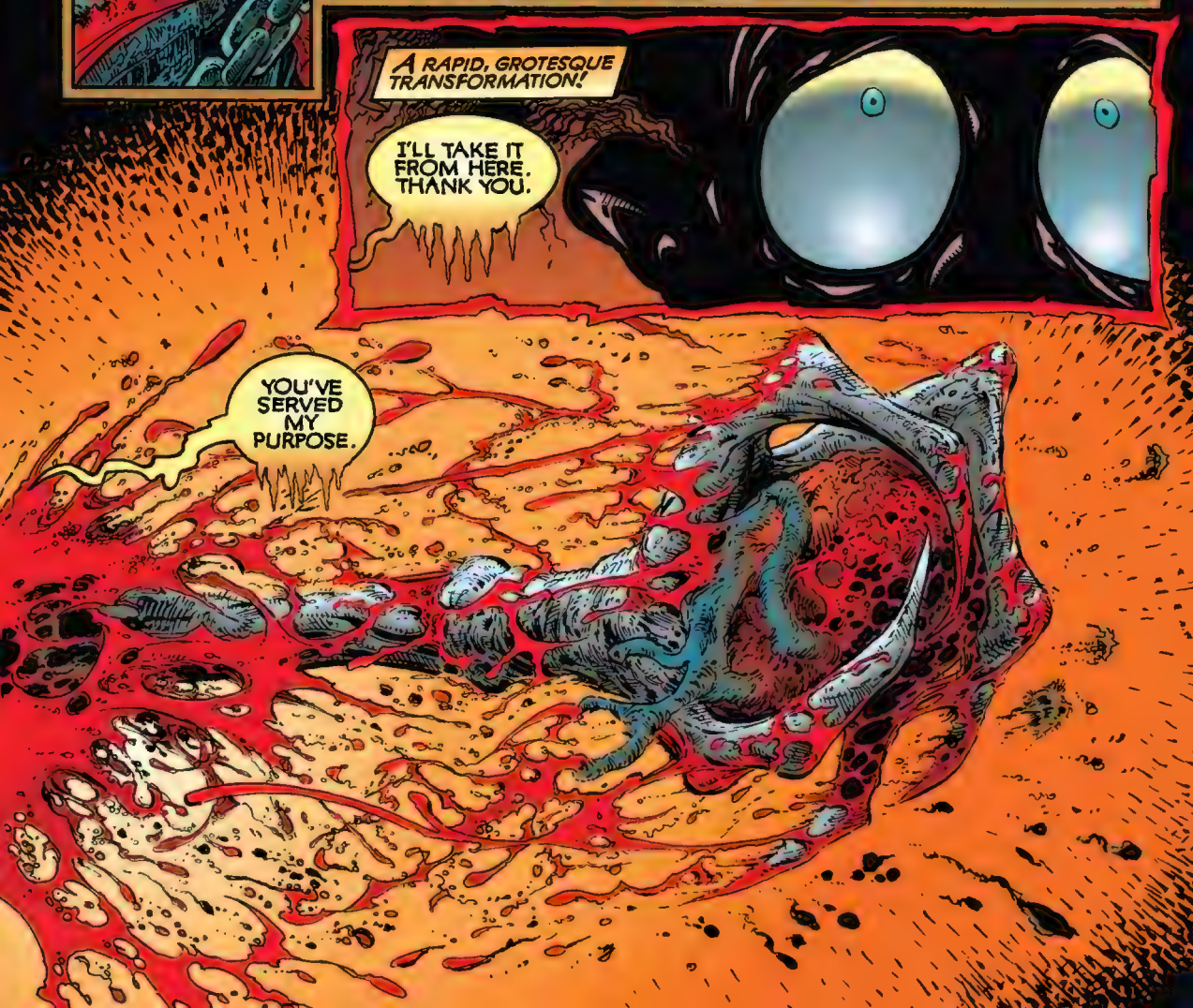
I THINK  
SO.

HOPEFULLY,  
HE'S  
FOLLOWING,  
LIKE YOU  
WANTED.  
WHAT'S  
NEXT?

A RAPID, GROTESQUE  
TRANSFORMATION!

I'LL TAKE IT  
FROM HERE.  
THANK YOU.

YOU'VE  
SERVED  
MY  
PURPOSE.

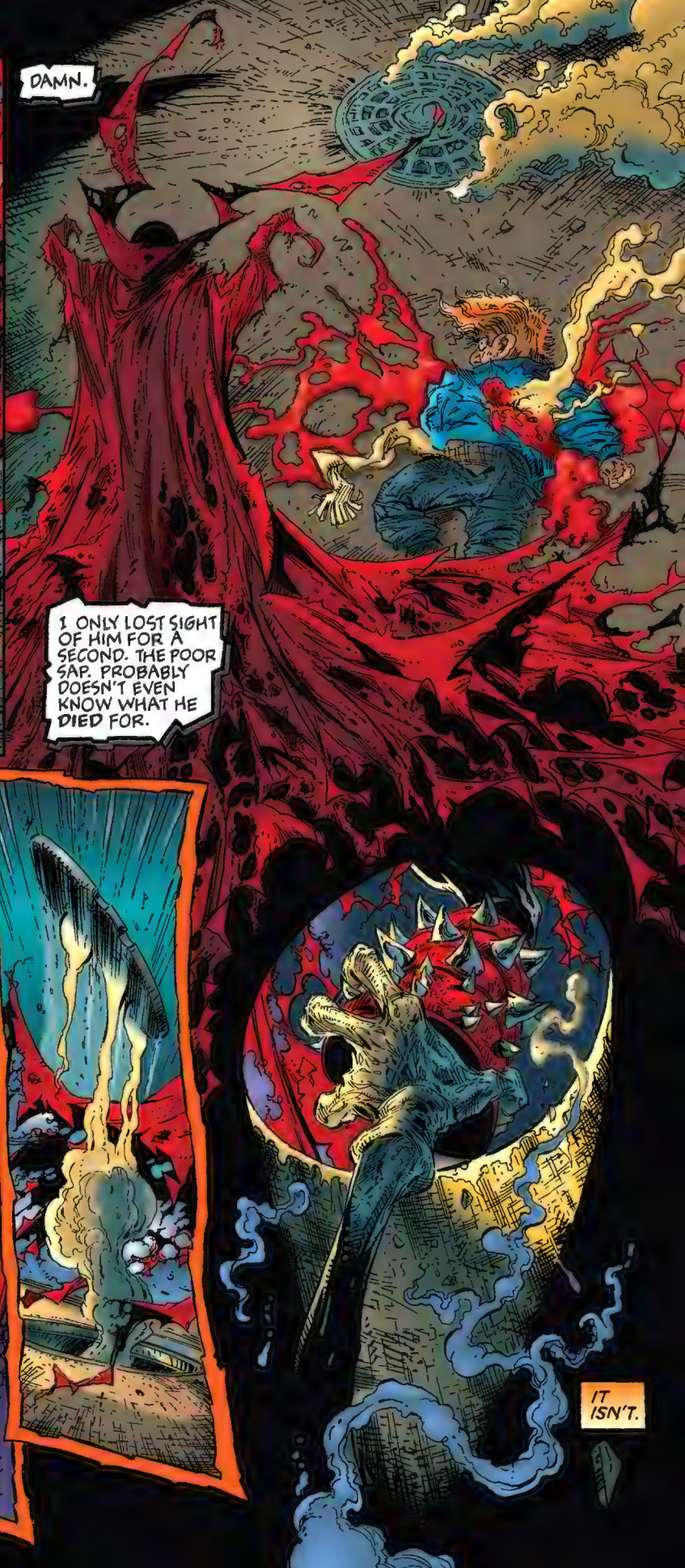






A HEARTBEAT LATER, THE SKY IS BLANKETED IN RED.

DAMN.



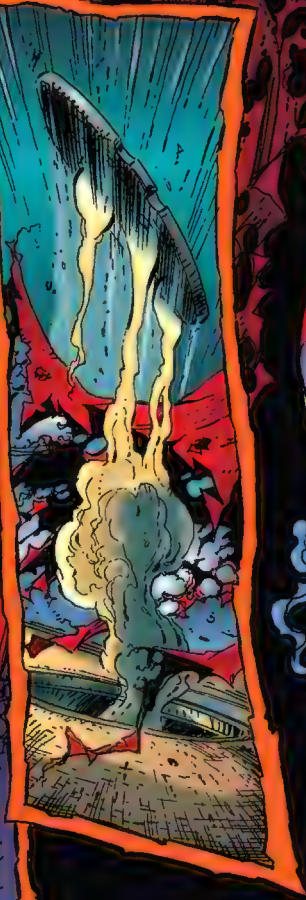
I ONLY LOST SIGHT OF HIM FOR A SECOND. THE POOR SAP. PROBABLY DOESN'T EVEN KNOW WHAT HE DIED FOR.



BUT THE KILL'S STILL FRESH.




THE KILLER CAN'T BE FAR.



IT ISN'T.





SPAWN  
PLUMMETS  
40 FEET TO  
THE WORLD  
THAT LIES  
BELOW.

YOUR  
EXISTENCE  
HAS BECOME  
A *FARCE*.  
YOU'VE LEARNED  
**NOTHING**  
ABOUT WHAT  
YOU ARE.

IT'S AN *HONOR*  
TO BE CHOSEN A  
HELLSPAWN!  
DO YOU  
*UNDERSTAND?*

**AN HONOR!!**

YOU GET  
SOMETHING  
STRAIGHT. HELL  
PICKED ME--  
NOT THE  
OTHER WAY  
AROUND.

SO I  
DON'T GIVE  
A DAMN  
WHAT YOU  
THINK.





THEN  
YOU'RE A  
**FOOL,**  
LITTLE  
BOY--



YOU SEE, I  
HEAR YOU'RE  
THINKING  
ABOUT  
SKIPPING  
TOWN,  
AGAIN.

WELL, I  
**DON'T** THINK  
THAT'S SUCH A  
WISE DECISION,  
BECAUSE WE **WOULDN'T**  
WANT TO HAVE YOUR  
SERVANT BUMS  
LOOKING LIKE OUR  
SLAUGHTERED **FRIEND**  
UPSTAIRS..

NOW  
**WOULD**  
WE?

--BECAUSE  
YOU **DON'T** HAVE  
A CHOICE! SO  
YOU'D **BETTER**  
CARE WHAT  
I THINK.

THE CHAIN SNAPS  
TO LIFE, TRIGGERED  
BY SPAWN'S RAGE.


YOU  
STAY  
AWAY  
FROM  
THEM.

Ok, I  
**WILL..**

BUT **ONLY** AS  
LONG AS YOU STAY  
IN THIS AREA. I WANT  
TO KNOW **EXACTLY**  
WHERE I CAN FIND  
YOU, DAY OR  
NIGHT.

**EVERY**  
SOUND.  
**EVERY**  
SHADOW.  
THINK OF  
ME.





'CAUSE  
ONE DAY  
I'LL COME TO  
**OBLITERATE**  
YOU!

THAT'LL  
PROVE  
ONCE AND  
FOR ALL THAT  
**NONE** ARE AS  
WORTHY  
OF THE SPAWN  
TITLE AS  
HELL'S **TRUE**  
CITIZENS.

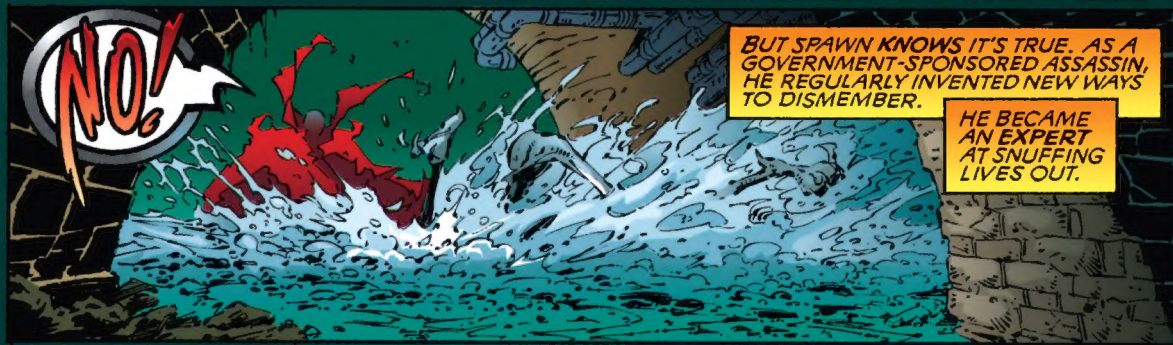




AFTER ALL, I CAN KILL AS WELL AS YOU CAN.

THAT CORPSE UP ABOVE... MUST HAVE WARMED YOUR BLOOD JUST SEEING IT.

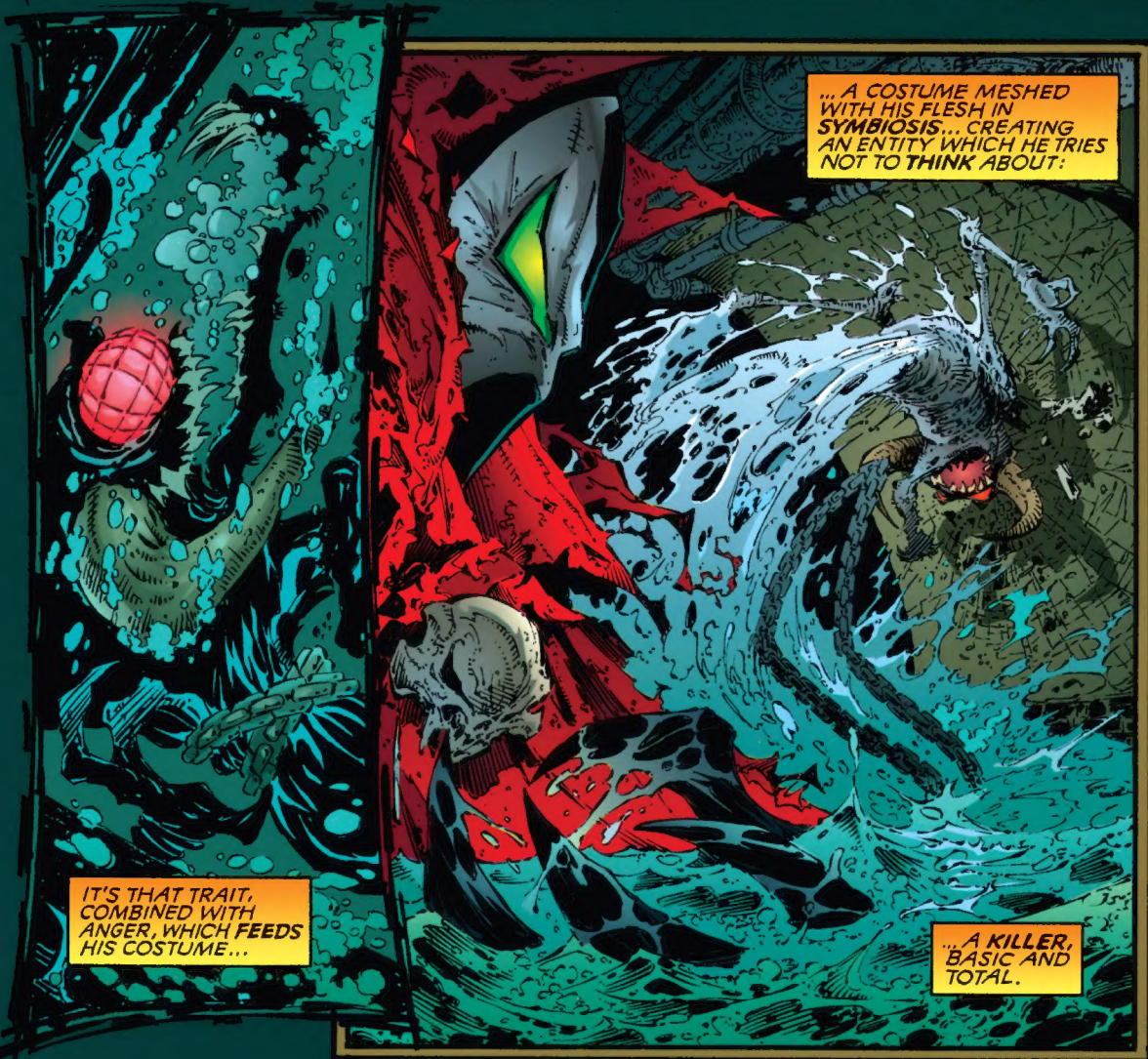
REMEMBER HOW GOOD YOU WERE AT GUTTING PEOPLE LIKE THAT...?



NO!

BUT SPAWN KNOWS IT'S TRUE. AS A GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED ASSASSIN, HE REGULARLY INVENTED NEW WAYS TO DISMEMBER.

HE BECAME AN EXPERT AT SNUFFING LIVES OUT.




... A COSTUME MESHED WITH HIS FLESH IN SYMBIOSIS... CREATING AN ENTITY WHICH HE TRIES NOT TO THINK ABOUT:

IT'S THAT TRAIT, COMBINED WITH ANGER, WHICH FEEDS HIS COSTUME...

... A KILLER, BASIC AND TOTAL.



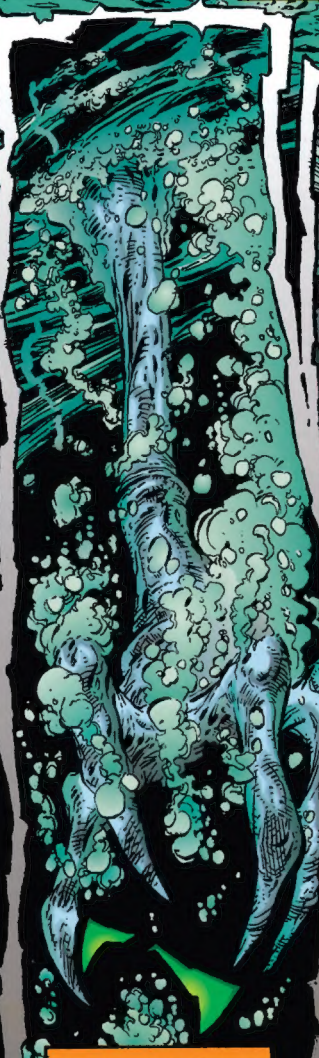


THE  
UNIFORM!  
HOW'D YOU  
TRAIN IT TO  
MORPH THIS  
SOON? IT  
SHOULD STILL  
BE INCU-  
BATING!

NEARBY,  
SHROUDED IN  
DARKNESS, A  
PAIR OF INQUIR-  
ING EYES SOAK  
UP THE UNFOLD-  
ING ACTION.


SPAWN IS COMPLETELY  
CONFUSED BY THE  
VIOLATOR'S OUTBURST.

TELL ME!  
WHO'S  
HELPING  
YOU?!

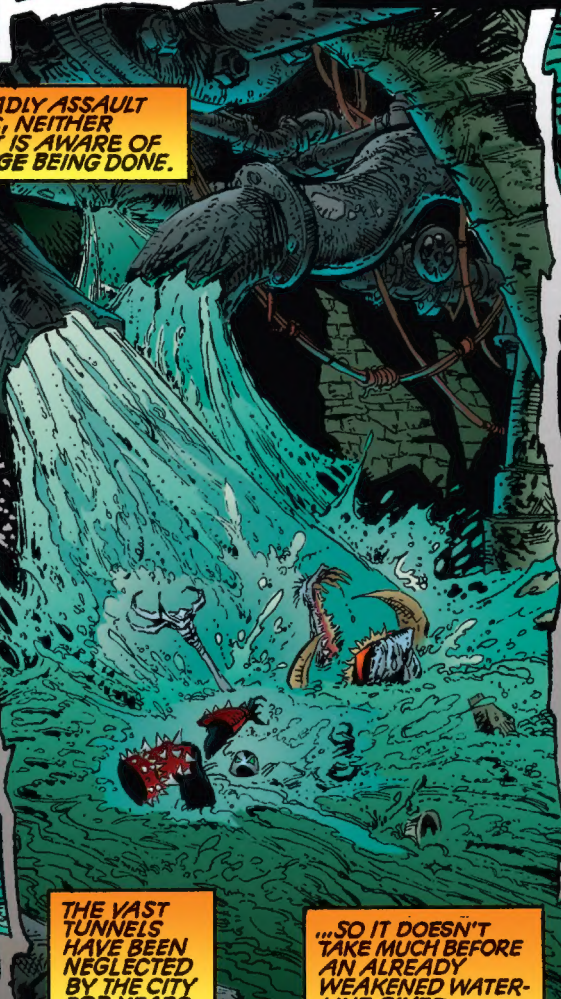


AS THE DEADLY ASSAULT  
CONTINUES, NEITHER  
OPPONENT IS AWARE OF  
THE DAMAGE BEING DONE.

SOON, ONE OF THE  
COMBATANTS IS  
LOST IN THE  
MURKY LIQUID.



THE VAST  
TUNNELS  
HAVE BEEN  
NEGLECTED  
BY THE CITY  
FOR YEARS...



...SO IT DOESN'T  
TAKE MUCH BEFORE  
AN ALREADY  
WEAKENED WATER-  
LINE GIVES,  
EXPLODING WITH  
COUNTLESS TONS  
OF SEWAGE.



LIKE ANOTHER  
PIECE OF  
GARBAGE  
CAUGHT  
IN THE  
DELUGE,  
THE HERO IS  
SLAMMED  
FROM SIDE  
TO SIDE.

SURVIVAL IS  
HIS ONLY  
PRIORITY.

HE LEARNS  
THAT HIS  
BODY, NOW  
COMPOSED  
OF NECRO-  
PLASM,  
STILL NEEDS  
OXYGEN.

GASP!

AND WORSE.  
THE VIOLATOR  
HAS VANISHED.  
SPAWN EXPECTS,  
THOUGH, THAT  
HE'S SOME-  
WHERE IN THESE  
SEWERS--  
UNHARMED...

... AND THAT HE'S  
AT THE MERCY OF  
THAT CREATURE'S  
NEXT MOVE.

6:8:8:7

TO BE CONTINUED...







Tyrant  
Lizard  
King

EMPIRE